(a) whether it is a fact that the Federation of Indian Mineral Industries (FIMI) has urged upon Government to declare mining as an 'Industry' ; and

(b) what new incentives/liberalised measure Government propose for the rapid growth of this important sector ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has adopted the National Mineral Policy recently. The policy provides various measures for rapid growth of the mineral sector. These include financing of mine development and also exploration integral to the mining project, fiscal measures designed to promote mineral exploration and development including beneficiation, promotion of small scale mining of small deposits, import of machinery and equipment to improve efficiency, productivity and economics of mining operations, incentives for utilisation of low grade minerals, mineral waste and rejects, induction of foreign technology and participation in exploration for high value and scarce minerals.

Export of Agricultural Products by the STC

1891. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the STC has formulated a strategy to boost agricultural exports within the next five years ;

(b) whether any concrete formula has been prepared in this regard ; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI ARANGIL SREEDHARAN) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) STC plans :—

(i) procurement of agricultural products for direct expor instead of the existing system of back-to-back arrangements;

(ii) export of agricultural products in consumer packs under its own brand name, wherever possible.

(iii) sale of agricultural products like coffee and Basmati Rice on consignment basis ;

(iv) financial assistance to its associate suppliers for increasing the exports ;

(v) exploration of new distributing channels in potential markets.

LIC Court cases in connection with L & T Takeover

1892. SHRI SATYA PRAKASH MALAVIYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that LIC would be moving the court with regard to the L&T takeover controversy;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) how much money was budgeted for the purpose and how much of the same has been spent so far; and

(d) how much fee is estimated to be paid to M/s. Amarchand Mangaldas and Hiralal Shroff and Company, the solicitors, by LIC in the L&T matter?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI ANIL SHASTRI): (a) The LIC has no proposal